

**Minutes of the Public Hearing
of the Clark County Drainage Board
Clark County, Indiana**

September 17, 2026

The Clark County Drainage Board met in Special Session on September 17, 2026, in the First Floor Meeting Chamber #103 of the Clark County Government Center, 300 Corporate Drive, Jeffersonville, Indiana at 5:00 pm. Present were President Jack Coffman, Vice-President Alan Conner, Member Rob Lewellen, Ex-officio non-voting member Clark County Surveyor David Ruckman, Attorney Ron Culler, Coordinator Talaina Taff, Petitioner Patrick Cranmer, and Respondent Matthew A. Cranmer. Petitioner Norma Cranmer was absent.

The Board held a public hearing regarding an alleged obstruction of a natural surface watercourse pursuant to Indiana Code 36-9-27.

Chairman Jack Coffman called the meeting to order and reviewed the hearing procedures. He stated that the hearing would be limited to the alleged obstruction of a natural surface watercourse and that the County Surveyor would first present his determination. The Petitioner and Respondent would then have an opportunity to present their respective positions. Mr. Coffman also reviewed the procedures for testimony and questioning.

Clark County Surveyor David Ruckman was the first to testify, presenting evidence regarding the existence and subsequent obstruction of a natural surface watercourse. He testified that the specific obstruction consisted of a car frame and four wheels and stated that it was not a major waterway, but was a natural surface watercourse.

Next, First Deputy Surveyor Joshua Cassin presented testimony in agreement with Mr. Ruckman's findings regarding the existence and obstruction of a natural surface watercourse.

Attorney Ron Culler questioned the witnesses regarding the approximate width of the watercourse's flow path. First Deputy Surveyor Joshua Cassin responded, estimating the width of the path to be under one foot.

Vice Chairman Alan Conner, who originally inspected the site when the drainage issue was filed, was called upon by the Chairman to provide testimony. Mr. Conner noted he had no additional physical observations to add to the previous testimony but stated that his review of historical photographs and elevations from 2018 confirmed the existence of a natural watercourse running through the affected properties and ultimately discharging into the creek.

Petitioner Patrick Cranmer was duly sworn, and testimony and evidence were formally presented to the Board.

Board Member Rob Lewellen asked Mr. Patrick Cranmer how long he had lived at the residence, to which Mr. Cranmer replied that he built the house in 2019. Mr. Lewellen asked for clarification as to whether the issue had been ongoing for the past couple of years, and Mr. Cranmer agreed. Discussion followed regarding the removal of a mound/hill. Mr. Lewellen asked who removed it, and Mr. Cranmer replied that Trent Guthrie had removed it.

Chairman Jack Coffman asked Mr. Patrick Cranmer who owned the property prior to 2019, when the house was built. Mr. Cranmer replied that his son had owned the property since 2013, and that he purchased the back half in 2019 and built his house on it.

Attorney Ron Culler clarified that Mr. Patrick Cranmer widened a portion of a cut-through in the hill. Mr. Cranmer confirmed that he had widened the path using a tractor and a 60-inch box bucket.

Next, Respondent Matthew Cranmer was duly sworn, and testimony and evidence were formally presented to the Board.

Mr. Matthew Cranmer stated that the car body and tires were placed in the area to help prevent erosion of his yard caused by water rushing through the area. He stated that, in 2019, when Mr. Patrick Cranmer built the house, the lateral line drains ran back toward the area where water was pooling. He also stated that he believed the pond dam was leaking.

Mr. Matthew Cranmer stated that there had never been a natural waterway through the area. He stated that prior to 2016, when he allowed Mr. Patrick Cranmer to cut through the dam, there was no waterway. He further stated that he had a 2013 video showing him riding a four-wheeler over the dam, which he described as approximately seven feet tall and 80 feet long, with no drainage through it. He also referenced Google images dating back to 1998 that he stated showed the yard was low in that area.

County Surveyor David Ruckman asked Mr. Matthew Cranmer whether there had been ponding in the area. Mr. Cranmer stated that he purchased his house in 2008, at which time he began maintaining the yard. He stated that his brother purchased the house next door in 2013 and that he continued maintaining the area, which he described as having always been wet. He stated that the area was not maintained until 2016, when the cut-through was made.

Mr. Ruckman asked whether the water had ever drained. Mr. Matthew Cranmer stated that the water drained in the opposite direction, around the other side of the yard near the shelter house, which he stated was overgrown and had not been maintained. He reiterated that 2016 images showed the cut-through and stated that images from before 2016 showed no stream of water flowing through the area.

Attorney Ron Culler asked Mr. Matthew Cranmer if he had the images with him. Mr. Cranmer replied that he did. Mr. Culler stated that the Board needed to see the images and asked Mr. Cranmer to present them. Mr. Cranmer presented images dating from 1998 to the present and explained the images to the Board, noting that the year of each image was identified.

Mr. Matthew Cranmer stated that, in 2023, the hills were lowered to eliminate the need to weed-eat them and that the resulting fill was used to fill a pond on his property. He stated that the grade was not raised and that no changes were made to Mr. Patrick Cranmer's property. He further stated that the original berm remained in place.

Mr. Matthew Cranmer stated that the cut-through had been left in place and that erosion had caused it to become approximately 26 inches wide and 16 inches deep since 2023. He stated that he placed four tires in the area to address the erosion, but that the tires were subsequently moved by Mr.

County Surveyor David Ruckman asked Mr. Matthew Cranmer whether the area was an original terrace. Mr. Cranmer stated that when he purchased the house in 2008, the area was a mound of dirt, which he believed may have resulted from excavation of one or both ponds. He reiterated that images dating back to 1998 showed no cut-through or drainage through the area and stated that the area is approximately 30 feet from Mr. Patrick Cranmer's property.

Mr. Matthew Cramer stated that the images were taken in June 2026 following significant rainfall. He stated that he also had a video from June 3 showing Mr. Patrick Cranmer operating a backhoe and digging in the area, which he contended resulted in the pooled water and yard damage shown in images provided to the Board. Mr. Cranmer presented the video to the Board from his phone. Attorney Ron Culler advised him that the video would need to be sent by email.

Mr. Culler also asked whether Mr. Cranmer had additional images he intended to send by email, and Mr. Cranmer presented those images to the Board.

County Surveyor David Ruckman reviewed the land contours and floodplain information on the Beacon website. Attorney Ron Culler asked Mr. Matthew Cranmer to confirm that the images presented were from Google Earth, and Mr. Cranmer affirmed.

Mr. Ruckman asked Mr. Cranmer whether ponding had occurred downstream prior to the 2019 construction. Mr. Cranmer stated that it had and that the 2016 cut-through was made to help alleviate ponding behind Mr. Patrick Cranmer's pond.

Chairman Jack Coffman asked why the tires were originally placed in the area. Mr. Cranmer stated that they were placed to slow the water and help prevent erosion. He confirmed that the tires were subsequently removed and that he then placed a vehicle chassis in the area with the tires against it. Mr. Cranmer stated that the vehicle was approximately 30 feet from the property line and that water could still reach the yard by flowing under or around the tires. He further stated that, to his knowledge, the original berm had been present since 1998 and had been removed by Mr. Patrick Cranmer.

The Board continued its discussion with Mr. Matthew Cranmer as he identified specific locations and features on the Beacon website, including the property contours, historical drainage patterns, the original berm, and the location of the vehicle chassis.

Chairman Jack Coffman asked if there were any further questions from the Board. Hearing none, Mr. Coffman invited Mr. Patrick Cranmer to comment.

Mr. Patrick Cranmer testified that a natural drainage channel existed on the property when it was purchased and that the area had historically been wet and eroded. He stated that a channel was cut in 2016 to improve drainage, which alleviated the standing-water issue. He stated that the drainage remained satisfactory after he built his house in 2019 until grading and excavation work in 2023 caused the area to begin holding water again. Mr. Cranmer stated that tires were initially placed along the property line and caused silt to accumulate, restricting the flow. He stated that heavy rainfall later moved the tires into the yard. He also stated that the current issue is standing water following heavy rainfall, which makes the area difficult to maintain.

County Surveyor David Ruckman asked Mr. Patrick Cranmer about the berm and whether it had blocked the natural surface watercourse. Mr. Cranmer stated that the berm was already present

when the property was purchased in 2008 and remained in place in 2013. He stated that water was getting through or under the berm and that, in 2016, they cut through it to create a defined drainage channel. Mr. Cranmer stated that he did not know when or why the berm was originally constructed.

Attorney Ron Culler asked Mr. Patrick Cranmer if he could identify where he believed the car frame is now located. Mr. Patrick Cranmer identified it as being approximately 30 feet from the property line in the middle of Mr. Matthew Cranmer's yard. He stated that his primary concern was the change in elevation resulting from the 2023 grading, which raised the area that had been cut in 2016 to allow drainage. He stated that a defined channel remains on his property and that water flows toward Mr. Matthew Cranmer's property and under the berm. Mr. Cranmer stated that the area now drains sufficiently to be mowed when dry but continues to hold significant water following heavy rainfall. He stated that his primary concern was the blockage of the drainage path.

Chairman Jack Coffman asked Mr. Patrick Cranmer what he believed removal of the chassis would accomplish. Mr. Cranmer stated that its removal would not resolve the standing-water issue, which he attributed to the approximately 12-inch elevation restriction. He stated that the area only accumulates water during heavy rainfall and that the water now extends beyond the area that previously held water.

Chairman Jack Coffman invited Mr. Matthew Cranmer to make a final comment. Mr. Cranmer questioned why water would not follow the same path if it had historically flowed under the berm, noting that the berm had been in place since 1998. He stated that he did not alter the area in question, but instead used the excavated dirt to fill the pond and address existing erosion.

Following the testimony, Attorney Ron Culler outlined the Board's options for proceeding, including making a determination that evening or taking the matter under advisement and discussing it further.

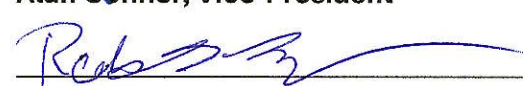
Vice-Chairman Alan Conner moved to take the matter under advisement and report back at the next Drainage Board meeting on October 20 at 5:00 pm. Member Rob Lewellen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously 3 - 0.

There being no further questions, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the public hearing. The motion carried unanimously 3 - 0, and the hearing was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Clark County Drainage Board
Clark County, Indiana



Jack Coffman, President

Alan Conner, Vice-President

Rob Lewellen, Member